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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 27, 2021.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

USE TRUMP POLICIES TO CONTROL BORDER CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MURPHY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to speak on the tragedy that is facing our Nation in the opioid epidemic.

As a physician for over 30 years, there is nothing more important to me than the health and safety of our communities. Unfortunately, it is no secret that communities across this great Na-

tion are suffering from an opioid crisis that is sweeping the country once again.

As a member of the North Carolina General Assembly, I worked tirelessly on legislation to help curb the number of overdose deaths that were occurring in our State. After three decades of climbing statistics of young people dying from overdoses, we effected a change, and that number started to decrease. We did this by decreasing the number of prescribed opioids.

However, tragically enough, that number has started to rise again. That is because the illicit fentanyl has now taken over the death market.

Last year alone, more than 93,000 Americans died of drug overdoses, which demonstrates a 30 percent increase from 2019. Of the 93,000 drug-related overdoses last year, 69 percent were opioid-related.

According to the CDC, last year, the tragic surge in these deaths is attributed largely to the illicit fentanyl. People know that, medically speaking, fentanyl is one of the most lethal substances on the planet. In fact, 2 milligrams can be considered a lethal dose.

Since Biden and HARRIS flung open our southern border, illicit drugs have poured into this country in record numbers. We no longer control our southern border; the Mexican drug cartels do. They love the fact the border has now been opened, and they have free rein to bring their death and destruction into this country.

Fentanyl has quickly become the drug of choice for these cartels. It is cheap, easy to manufacture, and highly profitable. Fentanyl is easy to smuggle in small amounts, and it is easier for drug mules to bring it across our porous southern border.

Its toxicity means that those purchasing this deadly opioid need only a small amount to cause death or serious harm.

There is a strong correlation between border crossings and high drug encoun-

ters, with no help coming from the White House.

Last month, Customs and Border Protection seized a record 1,060 pounds of fentanyl. That represents a higher total than the last three Junes combined. That 1-month seizure alone was enough drugs to kill 240 million people.

Think about it. Those are only the drugs that we catch. It is obvious from what is happening on the American streets that much more gets across the southern border.

The Biden-Harris administration denies this is a crisis. How can they do this to the American people? How do they not understand that this recklessness is leading to death and destruction in their own country.

At the same time, the Border Patrol encountered 188,000 illegal immigrants, so the hypocrisy continues. Thousands of people are coming into our country illegally, either not vaccinated or COVID-positive. Is anyone checking their status? But know if you come from Canada or another country, you have to prove you have been vaccinated—hypocrisy at the highest level coming from the White House, further death and destruction coming from the Biden-Harris administration.

President Biden knows he has botched our border security. Vice President HARRIS only got shamed into going to the border when former President Trump was going. She finally did go to a sterile area for a good photo shoot and not to the real area of crisis. They decided that no action is better than acknowledging their role in creating this public health, humanitarian, and national security crisis.

I am sorry, Mr. President and Mrs. Vice President, this is totally unacceptable. You are causing irreparable harm to this Nation.

In 2021, every community in this country is a border community. Making our Nation safer starts at our borders, and we have a responsibility to

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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ensure that we are doing everything we can to preserve our rule of law.

Mr. Speaker, I implore this administration to reinstate President Trump's effective and commonsense border policies to get the Biden border crisis under control.

SUPPORTING UCLA'S QUARTER IN WASHINGTON PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BARRAGÁN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, as a young college student, I remember coming to Washington, D.C., to work at the White House.

I was so inspired that, in 1999, I returned to D.C. through UCLA's Quarter in Washington Program. It was known as the CAPPP program, which stands for the Center of American Politics and Public Policy.

This time, my internship experience was very different. The UCLA's CAPPP program offered something unique, setting it apart from most programs that focus only on internships. It had a required research seminar that introduced me to serious original social research and writing. There is no doubt that this program honed my skill set and challenged me with a major research project.

At UCLA, the classes were so big that I did not have a similar opportunity on campus. The program engaged and encouraged me to seriously explore policy questions of interest to me in a disciplined way.

In fact, my research was on the issue of racial disparities in public health, a top priority of mine in Congress today.

The rewards I derived from UCLA's CAPPP Quarter in Washington program have been shared by many others who have benefited. I have learned that since my time in the program, CAPPP has brought ever more diverse cohorts of students, especially women and students of color. CAPPP demonstrated that top universities like UCLA can be competitive, excellent, and diverse at the same time.

Every May, UCLA hosts Undergraduate Research Week in its famed Pauley Pavilion. Over the past several years, CAPPP Quarter in Washington students have distinguished themselves, winning awards such as Dean's Prizes and UCLA's coveted Library Prize.

The recent director, a former UCLA professor of mine, Professor James Desveaux, said that more students from this program—2,500 miles from Westwood—have participated in UCLA's Undergraduate Research Conference than from any other program or department in the social sciences or humanities.

After graduation, CAPPP's alumni have gone on to remarkable accomplishments. Just a few examples of CAPPP alumni:

The top applicant to Yale Law School in 2018, now an editor at the Yale Law Journal.

The daughter of Nigerian immigrants who grew up in low-income housing in Los Angeles was an English major at UCLA with zero training in the social sciences until the CAPPP program in Washington. Because of her research in Washington, she gained admission to the prestigious Ph.D. program at Harvard's Chan School of Public Health in 2020.

Zachary Baron, oversight counsel for the House Committee on Ways and Means in this very Chamber.

Addar Levi, the Deputy General Counsel for the U.S. Treasury Department.

The former deputy city attorney for San Francisco.

And the list goes on and on.

This program taught us critical thinking and research skills that have transformed our lives and set us up to make a real difference in the world.

As an alumna, I join the UCLA CAPPP alumni group on Facebook. A few weeks ago, as I was reading my news feed, I got some stunning news: UCLA's CAPPP program has been dismantled.

I read the former director's farewell letter. The decision had nothing to do with COVID or funding shortages. The decision was made by a handful of administrators who believe that having a research requirement as part of UCLA's internship program in Washington is unnecessary. Students can do research on the campus, they insisted.

For 31 years, UCLA's CAPPP program demonstrated success. There was always high demand from its students wanting to engage in research while interning in Washington. Why deny them this opportunity? After all, aren't research universities supposed to be about teaching and research?

As a product of UCLA's CAPPP program, I know its value firsthand. I believe the skills I learned and the research I conducted had a role in getting me where I am today.

It truly saddens me to learn the program is coming to an end. This seems contrary to the mission of the number one public research university. I hope that UCLA will reconsider and give students the opportunity to grow from this unique undergraduate opportunity.

RECOGNIZING AUSTIN SKERO UPON HIS RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TONY GONZALES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Del Rio Border Patrol Sector Chief Austin Skero, who is retiring from Border Patrol at the end of July after a more than 30-year career in law enforcement.

Chief Skero has honorably served 26 years with Customs and Border Protection, beginning his career in 1995 in the Rio Grande Valley sector. Throughout his time with CBP, he has served Bor-

der Patrol in various roles across the Nation, from Washington, D.C., to Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Chief Skero has led the Del Rio sector as chief since July 2020. He oversees 250 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border, supervising 2,000 Border Patrol employees, 9 CBP stations, and 5 traffic checkpoints, and supporting 47 counties in Texas.

Chief Skero's mission as sector chief has been especially challenging this year. Del Rio currently is the eye of the storm as we tackle this southern border crisis. Over the last year, Chief Skero has led Del Rio Border Patrol agents through one of the largest spikes in migrant traffic in United States history.

This has been no easy task. Del Rio is the second most trafficked sector on the U.S.-Mexico border. Agents are apprehending an average of a thousand migrants per day, some who surrender willingly and others who try their hardest to avoid being caught.

Last month alone, Chief Skero's sector saw over 30,000 migrant apprehensions, a 700 percent increase from the previous year. In Del Rio, over 700 human smuggling cases have been prosecuted, and sex offender apprehensions are up 1,400 percent.

Apprehensions on trains in Uvalde are up 900 percent, and it is estimated that cartels make \$25 million a week in the Del Rio sector alone simply by trafficking people.

When agents are not in the field securing our borders, their dedicated work to ensure our migrants are protected has not gone unnoticed. Using the sector's limited resources to deal with many dimensions of the crisis has shown exemplary leadership from Chief Skero. Chief Skero has met and surpassed those expectations.

He has had the responsibility of briefing political figures from every corner of the Nation and every party on what is happening at our southern border.

I am incredibly grateful for Chief Skero's leadership, especially during this historic and difficult time for our border communities and our Border Patrol agents. His hard work and commitment have not gone unnoticed.

Chief Skero has received several awards and commendations throughout his career, including Border Patrol's highest award for heroism and valor, the Newton-Azrak Award. While we will miss his direction and guidance, I know his retirement is more than well-earned.

Chief Skero has lived a life driven by service to our community. The Del Rio border sector, our border communities, Texas, and our country are safer because of his leadership and work at the southern border.

Angel and I wish him and his wife, Chandra, all the best as they enter this next phase of their life.

I thank Chief Skero personally for all the direction and guidance he has given in this very difficult time. He has been at the forefront of this effort, at the